

## **Eighteen And Under Monthly Update: May 2010**

We continue to provide ongoing support and advocacy to young people who have been abused in any way. This support has continued to be provided through our drop in services, e-mail, telephone, text and increasingly the web site message board. Most young people self-refer to us, and these are the young people who usually will not engage (for whatever reason) with statutory services. We try to act as a bridge for them to access these agencies. The demand continues to grow from outside agencies across Scotland looking to refer young people to the various support services we provide. The services most in demand are Taywise (for young women affected by sexual exploitation) and DASI (for young people affected by domestic abuse). This is possibly because these services currently receive funding. We continue to carry out regular consultations with young people to find out what they need and want from services.

Throughout May we provided weekly Violence is Preventable sessions for 736 children and young people in several high schools and primary schools across Scotland. We provided 4 weeks training to 28 teachers and 5 school support staff and carried out 2 full-day in house training on V.I.P. for newer staff and volunteers at Eighteen And Under. We are currently using pre and post V.I.P. delivery questionnaires, pre and post questions with younger children, feedback from teachers and noting the number and nature of disclosures to measure effectiveness and build up our research data. A follow up visit to all schools for further feedback and information sharing is now also a standard part of the V.I.P.

We were privileged to have 2 police officers working with us for a whole afternoon of V.I.P. sessions in one of the primary schools we were working in this month. We used our 'Bobby Blue game' with the older children to discuss personal safety, community safety, police, legal issues and crime. The Police Officers loved the resource and the children like it too. With the younger children, we used our 'police knowledge' quiz to stimulate discussion and find out what the children's attitudes and awareness levels were so as to address issue and gaps. The police were extremely obliging, joined in the sessions fully and took the time to show the children their equipment and discuss police work with them. The officers also offered to be involved in further V.I.P. work!

This primary school has requested that we continue to visit to deliver more focused sessions with some of the children identified with particular difficulties. We have agreed! Positive feedback from the school has been that the children's behaviour has changed for the better, some parents have shown an interest and one boy with very challenging behaviour has not misbehaved since joining us for the V.I.P. sessions. Perhaps a coincidence but the teacher thinks not because this boy talks about the V.I.P. so positively.

The last V.I.P. sessions at a High School were extremely emotional with the young people really upset when they found out that it was their last session for this term. Positive feedback included the twin boys who stopped fighting with each other after our second visit and seemed to maintain non-violence towards each other throughout our time in the school, and the teacher who told us that we had changed some young people's views for the better. Analysis of the pre and post questionnaires will, in time, tell us more as will analysis of all the disclosures of harm, which were made during sessions.

We have also been asked by this school to continue visiting to carry out more focused work with smaller groups of young people with additional problems and particular needs. We have already developed V.I.P. resources to use with young people with learning and behavioural problems so this gives us opportunity to pilot and evaluate these further. We are to go back into this school after the Summer holidays to run V.I.P. sessions with more young people in different year groups who missed out this time around.

We had our last session at a smaller rural school we have been working in for the last 2 months and staff and children were sad to see us finish. This school has asked to have us back again next year and have embraced the V.I.P. messages and dealt immediately and appropriately with all disclosures from the children. It has been a real pleasure working with this school and staff.

We are set to launch V.I.P. in a whole new area of Scotland and try out a different approach. After a very successful presentation to a range of community-based workers and agencies, we are going to be able to try a wider community-based approach involving different agencies and individuals. We are keen to develop and evaluate as many different approaches as possible, particularly in different

communities, so as to ensure the most effective methods are being utilised. We will monitor and evaluate this closely.

Work has been underway to organise V.I.P. delivery in after-school clubs and summer play-schemes in many areas. We hope to be able to reach children and young people who may not be getting V.I.P. in school and also engage them in a different setting. After school groups and out of school play-schemes tend to be less structured than schools and we are keen to monitor and evaluate how successful V.I.P. might be in these settings.

V.I.P. accredited training programmes continue to be developed. Though this is still in its infancy, good progress continues to be made and the structure is rapidly taking shape. Based on one of the recommendations of an independent evaluation recently carried out on the V.I.P. project, we are pursuing development of our training capacity with vigour.

We continued to deliver Senior V.I.P. sessions in two older people's complexes working with 32 older people and 4 carers with both complexes completing the full 6-week programme this month. We use questionnaires with the participants prior to the beginning of the programme followed by the same questionnaire with the same people after they have received the full programme. Through this, we hope to be able to measure change brought about by the delivery of the Senior V.I.P. programme. Having now delivered the programme to over 500 older people we should soon have some results available. A preliminary report on the Senior V.I.P. will soon be available.

As we received some funding for delivery of Senior V.I.P. we have spent some time contacting new older people's complexes to offer them the full programme. There was an excellent uptake on this and we hope to develop further partnerships with the police, fire and rescue and local authorities in several areas in Scotland over the coming months to enhance Senior V.I.P. delivery.

Our e-mail campaign continues with the teams systematically e-mailing targeted areas to share information with a very broad section of the community and agencies about the Violence Is Preventable Project. This month we targeted Orkney, Shetland and the Highlands and Islands. We are very carefully monitoring feedback though web

site activity, inquiries and telephone calls to evaluate the impact of this campaign.

National and International work is well underway with one of our workers now increasingly dedicated to national and international development for V.I.P. work. We have submitted applications for funding to several national and international funders to try and secure funding for this important work and intend to pursue partnerships and funding with vigour. We are soon to feature in an International publication and hopefully this will increase opportunity for forming new partnerships and securing further funding opportunities to get V.I.P. to children in all parts of the world.

Preparation has been underway for workers to go to Rome to attend the World Health Organisation's Violence Prevention Alliance meeting. We are members of this important global alliance and though we are possibly the smallest organisation, in it, we try to be as active as we possibly can. Together we can achieve so much more than as individual agencies. As I write, 3 workers are in Italy preparing to attend the meetings. We hope, through networking, to find and encourage new partnerships in Europe and further afield, and we are also pursuing European funding.

We have been interviewed on local Radio a great deal this past month with our high profile continuing. Our Co-ordinator took part in a national documentary on child abuse in Scotland and gave opinions on what should be done to stop it. This is to be screened next month by BBC Radio Scotland. We were also recently interviewed by a newspaper for a feature article on the V.I.P. project.

Local and national newspapers and radio have been taking quite an interest in us partly because we have been shortlisted for the Charity Awards and partly because news is continuing to spread about the volume and quality of the work we are carrying out. We are constantly being approached for comment on current affairs and have become widely known for giving a fair and informed opinion on child protection in the UK. Though we continue to be controversial by not always agreeing with government policy, we stay true to insisting on evidence to support work that is carried out.

At a local level, two of our workers attended the Evening Telegraph's Make a Difference in the Community Hilton Awards dinner. After

eating a very posh dinner, we were awarded a framed certificate and £400 towards producing a new personal safety workbook for use with young people who have experienced abuse. We also received some very good local publicity and a few potential new partnerships out of it, which we will be building upon in the next few months.

After a long period of recruitment, short listing and interviews another new worker started with us this month to work on further promotion of the V.I.P. Project. It will take him some time to complete induction, read through, learn and digest everything but he is already well on his way to finding out how we work and what we do. Unfortunately, we did not find a suitable worker for the vacant V.I.P. Sessional worker post and our Directors will now need to rethink this, as this is the third time this post has been advertised unsuccessfully.

Students from a college in Scotland who were putting together a documentary on Internet safety and young people, came to us for interviews and opinions on the subject, as they had read about us in the newspapers. They filmed staff at the centre, carried out interviews and will be creating web pages to help keep young people safe and better informed.

Again, at a local level, work continues on developing and upgrading all our policies, procedures, strategies and plans. We are happy to be receiving ongoing support from local council officers and from Dundee Voluntary Action. We are also in the process of carrying out our annual Disclosures Scotland check on all staff and volunteers. We do not rely solely on the Disclosures Scotland checks to safeguard children but they remain an important part of what we do regularly.

Training of staff and volunteers has continued unabated. As we have been upgrading and reviewing our policies with staff, volunteers and service users; training in policy, practice and procedures is essential to keep everyone fully up to date. We have also had training on transgender issues, African culture and child protection in Africa, Hungarian culture and V.I.P.

We are very popular with people looking to do voluntary work and a steady stream of volunteers continues to approach us in the hope of joining our organisation. We remain open to all who fit with our aims

and objectives but of course they must receive training, supervision and support, which requires further resources.

New leaflets, posters and business cards have been designed with input from young people. Young people were able to be involved in initial discussions, photo-shoots, design and final outputs. To whatever level they felt able. Posters and leaflets are now being distributed to a variety of agencies. We also carried out a major mailing to over 1000 schools and nurseries to inform them of the V.I.P. Project.

DV8, our group for young people affected by LGBT issues has spread its wings towards independence. After being sheltered and supported by Eighteen And Under for the past 5 years, they applied for their own charity status and received it, opened a bank account and they have now secured a £10,000 grant for start up costs of the organisation. They will still be based in our Centre so as to share premises and resources between the various organisations. Hopefully we will all continue to share, work and grow together.

Similarly with 18 Plus which was formed just over a year ago. It has now begun to offer support services to male survivors of childhood sexual abuse and older survivors. A web site is in progress and leaflets and other publicity is being prepared. We have assisted with fundraising and the organisation is now looking quite healthy and ready to take off. They will also continue to share premises and resources with us for a while.

New services for male survivors of childhood sexual abuse are beginning to be set up in Scotland (again) and several have contacted us for assistance with fundraising because they heard that we are skilled in this area. We are of course, happy to try and help them.

We were offered 2 chinchillas that through no fault of their own needed to find a new home. We were of course happy to oblige given we had an empty cage. Tom and Jerry are 4-year-old brothers and are now happy living in a fabulous newly built 3-story cage thanks to our handyman volunteer.